

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert the following title before the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 1:

TROUGH PAN FOR A FACE CONVEYOR WITH A LOADING RAMP

Please insert the following heading before the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 1 and after new title stated above:

BACKGROUND

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 1, line 1 with the following amended paragraph:

The invention relates to a conveyor pan for face conveyors in underground winning or mining systems, in particular coal winning mining systems, with outward race and return race for guiding a scraper chain, between which a conveyor bottom is formed, with securing means attached to the ends of the conveyor pans on the goaf side and the wall side for a connecting component linking adjacent conveyor pans traction-proof together, preferably with guide means for a mining machine which may be moved along the wall and with a static loading ramp connected to the conveyor pan on the wall side and extending from the floor to the level of the outward race, by means of which muck may be loaded into the outward race as the face conveyor is advanced.

Please insert the following heading before the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 12:

SUMMARY

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

~~Object~~ In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a new and improved conveyor pan is provided. On advantage of this conveyor pan is to minimize that the disadvantageous climbing of a face conveyor used herewith is minimized or reduced by constructional measures on the conveyor pan.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 16 with the following amended paragraph:

~~This object is fulfilled by means of the invention as recited in Claim 1. In~~
More particularly, in accordance with this aspect of the present invention, the loading ramp consists of a curved or, in particular, an angled guide plate, the lower section of which is steeper relative to the floor or relative to the bottom of the channel than its upper section. Static loading ramps in the prior art consisted of modular components which on the wall side were attached to the side walls or side sections of the conveyor pans and a ramp which was flat for the entire extent of the conveyor pan, i.e. was disposed in a wedge-shaped position relative to the wall or to the floor or, alternatively, had a curved ramp with a relatively flat lower section, becoming steeper towards the outward race, and thus being curved towards the wall. ~~The applicant~~ It has been determined that by attachment of a wall-side guide plate and modification of the contour of the guide plate into a curve away from the wall the climbing tendency of the face conveyor during advancing is reduced. The curve entails in particular bending the guide plate such that its lower section is steeper. By means of these measures the static loading ramp is kept relatively short overall and increases the overall weight of the conveyor pan only slightly.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

In ~~[[the]]~~ one preferred embodiment of the conveyor pan, ~~preferred by the applicant~~ the apex line of the curve or the apex line of the bend of the guide plate may be disposed at the level of the conveyor bottom, preferably between the middle and the underside of the conveyor bottom and/or positioned below the center line of the point of application of force to the conveyor pan by the booms or pushers abutting the support system, and consequently below the articulation point of the advancing system disposed on the goaf side for moving the face conveyor. A particularly preferred variant has a guide plate with sections angled relative to each other, with the lower and the upper section both being essentially flat and enclosing an angle of approximately 150°-170°, preferably approximately 160° ± 4°. It is also advantageous if the lower section is angled by approximately 65°-85°, preferably 78° ± 4°, relative to the conveyor bottom and

the upper section is angled by approximately 45°-65°, preferably $55^{\circ} \pm 4^{\circ}$, relative to the conveyor bottom.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

For the assembly and disassembly of the face conveyor and for exchange of individual conveyor pans it is advantageous if the guide plate is fitted at the ends of the conveyor pan with recesses, which are matched in size to the dimensions of the securing means and/or conveyor pan connecting components. The securing means on the conveyor pan preferably consist of toggle bolt sockets and the conveyor pan connecting components preferably consist of toggle bolts, the heads of which can be inserted in the sockets. The recess may in particular be formed such that the lower section of the guide plate has or forms a bar at the lower edge, this bar extending as far as both conveyor pan ends, so that the guide plate at its lower edge is fully in contact with the conveyor pan's sheet metal bottom or similar and only has recesses at the respective conveyor pan ends, into which slack and fines can enter. Since after a short period of operation of the face conveyor these recesses clog up, the loading performance of the static loading ramp is not impacted by the recesses and the conveyor pan in accordance with this aspect of the present invention retains its lesser degree of disadvantageous climbing by comparison with generic conveyor pans. The limiting wall of the recess, which runs essentially parallel to the conveyor pan ends and continues as far as the level of the outward race, is preferably equipped with a detent, so that on the one hand sufficient clearance is provided to insert/remove the heads of the toggles, and on the other hand by means of the detent a type of cutout is created, thus giving, at the transition point from the guide plate to the recess, a better direction of the forces to be absorbed into the connected or welded-on area of the conveyor pan.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

In [[a]] one preferred embodiment the guide plate is welded to the conveyor pan. This is particularly advantageous if the lower section of the guide plate, in particular the bar at its lower edge, is welded to a bottom bar on the wall

side, to a sliding bar or to a machinery guide for the mining machine. By means of the weld seam at the lower edge and the connection with a bottom bar or sliding bar the layers of muck disposed on the floor are forced upwards over the entire width of the conveyor pan as the conveyor is advanced, without its being possible for coal or similar in this area to penetrate behind the guide plate and cause disadvantageous climbing of the conveyor.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 32 with the following amended paragraph:

The guide plate in accordance with one aspect of the present invention may be used both with conveyor pans having lower race and outward race permanently attached to each other and with conveyor pans having a removable trough as the outward race. With the permanently attached outward race, the side section may consist of rolled steel sections and comprise an approximately T-shaped cross-section, as is known for example from DE 40 06 183 A1, rendering it possible for the upper section of the guide plate to be welded to the underside of the horizontal web of the L-shaped or T-shaped side section. With conveyor pans having a removable trough as the outward race the upper section of the guide plate is preferably welded to the framework holding the removable trough.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 26 with the following amended paragraph:

[[The]] One preferred application of the conveyor pans in accordance with the present invention is with face conveyors having guide means for a cutting mining machine, in particular having guide means for a drum cutter-loader. In the case of a conveyor pan having guide means for a drum cutter-loader the tendency to climb can be further minimized if the horizontal web of the outward race's side section on the wall side simultaneously forms the wall-side guide for the drum cutter-loader and the drum cutter-loader then runs on that horizontal web. These measures also allow the mining machine to be kept more compact, so that the roof shield over the shield supports can also be kept shorter than with conveyor pans featuring on the wall side a separate machine track ahead of the wall-side side section of the conveyor pans.

Please delete the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 7:

~~Further advantages and embodiments of the conveyor pan in accordance with the present invention will be found in the following description of an exemplary embodiment represented in the drawing. In the drawing:~~

Please insert the following heading before the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 12:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 12 with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a conveyor pan in accordance with one aspect of the present invention with a guide plate welded on the wall side as the loading ramp; and

Please insert the following heading before the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 20:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 22 with the following amended paragraph:

~~In accordance with the present invention the illustrated embodiment,~~ conveyor pan 10 comprises on the wall side 8 a static loading ramp for muck from loosened rock, in particular loosened coal, consisting of the guide plate identified in its entirety as 50, welded to conveyor pan 10 and extending from floor 11 (Figure 2) up to the level of outward race 1. Guide plate 50 comprises a lower section 51 and an upper section 52, which are each essentially flat and are angled relative to each other at the apex line 53. In the area of the two toggle sockets 21, 22 guide plate 50 is fitted with recesses 54, 55, extending over the entire height of upper section 52 and over approximately half the height of lower section 51. The scale and dimensions of recesses 54, 55 on guide plate 50 are matched to the scale and dimensions of toggle sockets 21, 22 and to those of

the toggle bolts, not shown, that can be engaged in the latter. Lower edge 56 of guide plate's 50 lower section 51 extends over the entire width of the conveyor pan, so that guide plate 50 forms a narrow bar 60 extending over the entire width of the conveyor pan, in order to direct the muck towards outward race 1 as the face conveyor is advanced. The lower edge of the bar 60 is welded to a sliding bar 26 by means of a weld seam (57, Figure 2), with the sliding bar being welded below the horizontal web 24 of the lower side section 6 on the wall side. The sliding bar extends beyond the side wall of conveyor pan 10 formed by the outer faces of side sections 3, 6 and conveyor bottom 9, on the wall side. Bar 60 forms the lower limiting wall of recesses 54, 55 while the essentially vertical limiting wall 54', 55' of recesses 54, 55 is fitted approximately at the level of apex line 53 with a detent 62 or 63. As a result of detent 62, 63 the upper section 52 of the guide plates transitions in a curve into the conveyor pan. Detents 62, 63 and the curved shape reduce the danger of formation of fracture cracks in side section 3.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 22 with the following amended paragraph:

As Figure 2 shows clearly, sliding bar 26 is slightly angled relative to the conveyor bottom or to sheet metal bottom 25 by approximately 5° , so that conveyor pan 10 is in contact with floor 11 in the underground face only in the frontal area 27 of the underside of sliding bar 26. Figure 2 also shows in particular that guide plate 50 forming the loading ramp includes an angle α of approximately 160° between lower section 51 and upper section 52 and that lower section 51 of guide plate 50 is steeper relative to floor 11 or to conveyor bottom 9 than upper section 52. The bend of the lower, essentially flat section 51 of guide plate 50 relative to conveyor bottom 9 is shown in Figure 2 as β and is approximately $78^\circ \pm 4^\circ$, while the angle γ of upper section 52 to conveyor bottom 9 is approximately $55^\circ \pm 4^\circ$. As a result of this differing slope of lower section 51 and upper section 52 and the overall extremely steep shape of loading ramp 50 between the wall-side front face 28 of sliding bar 26 and the front face 29 of horizontal web 17 of the outward race's side section 3, the conveyor pan in accordance with the ~~present invention~~ illustrated embodiment is made considerably shorter than was the case with known conveyor pans.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 23 with the following amended paragraph:

The representation of conveyor pan 10 does not show the guide means for a mining machine. In ~~[[the]]~~ one preferred application of the conveyor pans, a mounting shaft with, for example, a drive rack for a drum cutter-loader is mounted on the goaf side and the upper face 17' of the horizontal web 17 of the wall-side side section 3 of outward race 1 forms a track for the drum cutter-loader.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 31 with the following amended paragraph:

~~The person skilled in the art can deduce from the preceding description a series of modifications which are also intended to fall within the protection of the dependent claims.~~ In one embodiment, not shown, with removable trough the upper edge of the guide plate is welded to the frame construction for supporting and fixing the removable trough. In addition, ahead of the angled guide plate forming the static loading ramp a section of a machine track could also be formed. Instead of an angled guide plate with flat sections the guide plate could also be rounded or curved, within limits, and the apex line could also be located higher than the conveyor bottom. The securing means and conveyor pan-joining components could be different from the toggle sockets and matching toggle bolts shown, which would also cause the shape of the recesses to be different.

Please add the following paragraph after the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 31:

The exemplary embodiment has been described with reference to the embodiments. Obviously, modifications and alterations will occur to others upon reading and understanding the preceding detailed description. It is intended that the exemplary embodiment be construed as including all such modifications and alterations insofar as they come within the scope of the appended claims or the equivalents thereof.

Please replace the Abstract paragraph beginning on page 15, line 1 with the following paragraph:

~~The invention relates to a~~ A conveyor pan 10 for face conveyors in underground coal mining systems[[, with]] has outward race 1 and return race 2, between which a conveyor bottom 9 is formed, with toggle sockets 21, with guide means for a mining machine which can be moved along the wall, in particular a drum cutter-loader, and with a static loading ramp connected on the wall side to the conveyor pan, and extending from the floor to the level of the outward race, by means of which muck can be loaded into the outward race as the face conveyor is advanced. The loading ramp ~~consists of~~ includes an angled guide plate 50, the lower section 51 of which is steeper relative to the conveyor bottom 9 or the floor 11 than the upper section 52. ~~In consequence the conveyor pan 10 is made very compact and does not demonstrate a tendency to climb.~~